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ABSTRACT

The political educator takes the perspective that, in Thomas Hobbes's phrase, "man is not born fit for society." To make him so fit, contemporary political educators seek to develop individual autonomy and democratic affect, which would have the added task of reforming all of society in the future. The current consensus holds that the best location for political education is the school. This paper argues that the school is an inappropriate location to play the tension between autonomy and affect because the age of students and the hidden curriculum threaten one or the other. The paper points out that empirical research does not support the consensus among political educators that a reform of society could be wrought through the school. It recommends, therefore, that educators explore the possibility of adult political education, teaching people to be citizens of the states they already have the right to reform. Includes nine notes. Contains 120 references. (Author/BT)

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Democratic Miseducation: Preparing Students for Democracies that Do not Exist

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Democratic Miseducation:
Preparing Students for Democracies that Do not Exist

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The political educator takes the perspective that, in Hobbes's phrase, "man is not born fit for society." To make him so fit, contemporary political educators seek to develop individual autonomy and democratic affect, which would have the added task of reforming all of society in the future. The current consensus holds that the best location for political education is the school. I argue that the school is an inappropriate location to play the tension between autonomy and affect because the age of students and the hidden curriculum threaten one or the other. I also point out that empirical research does not support the consensus among political educators that a reform of society could be wrought through the school. I recommend, therefore, that we explore the possibility of adult political education, teaching people to be citizens of the states they already have the right to reform.

The Constant Crisis of Political Education

Much like the condition of literacy, the condition of democratic competency is the exception in human history, today as in the past. Reading and writing must be taught; so too the skills of the democratic citizen. We may broaden this comment, in fact, to include all political skills more generally, not just the democratic skills. In Hobbes's famous phrase, "man is made fit for Society not by nature, but by training" (Hobbes 1998, 25). While this may seem to be more the perspective of the pessimistic Hobbes than his liberal descendents, facing up to this problem has little to do with one's disposition. However, it is true that many of liberalism's greatest philosophers have given us the impression that citizens need not be made because, they argue, the real fault lies in their unmaking, that is, the fault lies in the illiberal politics that impede the natural development of the citizen. This is a simplistic mischaracterization of Locke, Rousseau,

Kant, Mill, and others. But the optimism of the spontaneous liberal citizen is a part of a rhetoric of liberalism that hides the difficulties it must face, hiding especially its pessimism.

The optimism of the rhetoric of liberalism has been abandoned by those theorists engaged in the project of political education. Although not yet pessimists, they have dropped much of the easy optimism of liberalism preferring instead a language of crisis. It must be said, however, that the crisis they address is not the crisis that has exercised so many academics of late. Or rather, it may be the same crisis on the surface, but the analyses are very different. Many who perceive a crisis among advanced democracies point to low voter turnout, civic disaffection, declining political trust and other signs of malaise to conclude that our generally unhealthy polities may soon worsen and even die without the direct application of treatment (Glendon and Blankenhorn 1995; Nye, Zelikow, and King 1997; Pharr and Putnam 2000; Putnam 1993, 2000; Sandel 1996; Skocpol and Fiorina 1999).[1] Both the diagnosis and the prognosis may be accurate, but is it proper to describe this as a crisis and not, rather, as the chronic condition of mass democracies? In other words, instead of implying that we have entered upon an unprecedented or, at the least rare, period of decline that is the result of some unusual and new cause, perhaps it is better to understand what is identified as a crisis as the normal condition and its opposite as the extraordinary. This perspective need not induce apathy, for it is the perspective of the political educator.

Political education is not an idea new to political philosophy. It is probably as old as that first insight of philosophy, the distinction between nature and art. But it is only

recently that theorists have returned to this subject in the numbers, prominence, and the sense of urgency that draws it attention. There are a number of possible ways to divide and subdivide those theorists who have turned towards political education. For instance, some are deliberative democrats (Gutmann 1987), while some are liberals. Among the liberals some are *A Theory of Justice* Rawlsians (Callan 1997; Levinson 1999) while others are *Political Liberalism* Rawlsians (Macedo 2000). Yet for all that categorization is a useful exercise, the problems they seek to resolve, the methods they choose to use, and the goals they hope to achieve are remarkably similar. Whatever the disputes and disagreements between these various schools of thought – and I do not intend to minimize them – there is very little material difference when it comes to the problem of political education. But to avoid some of the disagreements that do exist and to provide a bounded framework for this study, I shall limit myself to those prominent political educators who have most fully systematized their thoughts on the topic, namely Eamonn Callan, Amy Gutmann, Meira Levinson, and Stephen Macedo. I shall mention other political educators, however, where appropriate and in order to give an indication of the consensus and the direction of the field.

All political educators agree that political education is a necessary part of any polity and that it is a special concern for democracies. As we shall see, it is exactly this kind of constant attention to the health of the polity that provides political educators with some of their most compelling insights as well as being the source of their resolution in the face of a never-ending process. But more than resoluteness accompanies this perspective, and we shall need to consider in some detail the plans of our contemporary

[1] These are only the more prominent authors as an exhaustive list would run to excess. However, many of the trends they point to are not new to the political science literature. See, for instance, Almond and Verba

political educators.[2] Among the most significant and recurring of these plans is the use of schools to model social structures and practices educators seek to perpetuate in the larger society.

Looking at the schools as locations for political education can be justified on a number of grounds, not least of which is the common-sense observation that we entrust them with teaching our children a whole host of other skills and concepts. But beyond common sense, a body of empirical research has pointed-out a strong correlation between longer amounts of time spent in educational institutions and higher scores on several tests of democratic competence, moral sophistication, and political engagement (Bollen 1979; Bollen and Jackman 1985; Krosnick and Milburn 1990; Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry 1996; Rest and Thoma 1995).[3] The conclusions drawn from this research have been challenged, however. Competing studies suggest that social attitudes existing prior to school attendance (Schweinhart and Weikart 1997), that social class and cultural background (Emler and Dickinson 1993), and that even differences in naturally occurring intellectual abilities (Jencks 1972; Schonbach et al. 1981) diminish to insignificance any apparent correlation between schooling in and of itself and any list of democratic attitudes. Still other studies correlate relative levels of education to positive indicators suggesting that education as a scarce resource produces a success-failure dynamic in which those who achieve more education feel proportionately more confident to pursue

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(1963) and Berger and Neuhaus (1977).

[2] I concentrate on our contemporaries because I intend to develop elsewhere an argument about the differences between the dominant contemporary liberal concept of political education and an older, but still liberal, tradition predating it.

[3] My reference to empirical studies both here and at the end of the paper should suggest neither an exhaustive review nor adherence to any particular conclusions. The literature is far too extensive and, in places, ambiguous for me to claim either. Instead, I cite a number of studies to provide the borders set by empirical research within which theoretical work can be more profitably done. For more complete accounts of the literature see the excellent study by Elmer and Frazer (1999) and Kamens (1988).

their political interests while those without educational success lack this confidence (Devos, Deschamps, and Comby 1994; Pettigrew et al. 1998).

While the evidence that attending a school (any school) will solve the ills of advanced democracies is by no means conclusive, political educators who turn to the schools have more consistent research to draw upon when suggesting that particular types of schooling will produce the desired effects (Angell 1998; Blankenship 1990; Harwood 1992). As such, contemporary political educators do not rely upon just any educational experience to achieve their ends. It is a particular type of schooling that will produce the two goals of individual autonomy and what I shall call "democratic affect", a commitment on the part of each individual to the autonomy of others and the system of democratic government. It is my contention in this paper that using schools to achieve these two goals is hampered by the limited suitability of the schools for this purpose and that this limitation in turn exacerbates the unhealthy tension between the triangle of school, autonomy, and affect.

Social Reproduction

Before exploring the goals of political educators, it is best to begin with the reasons why they think their project is necessary. Significantly, the reason has little or nothing to do with contemporary evidence of a decline or current crisis in democracy. Instead, political education is rooted in a theory of how societies are perpetuated and maintained over time. Drawing heavily upon John Dewey, Amy Gutmann explains that each society reproduces itself by socializing the next generation. The virtue of the democratic state is that it makes this social reproduction a conscious act. In her words,

"A democratic theory of education focuses on what might be called 'conscious social reproduction' – the ways in which citizens are or should be empowered to influence the education that in turn shapes the political values, attitudes, and modes of behavior of future citizens" (Gutmann 1987, 14). Because education broadly understood does, consciously or unconsciously, shape the future society in producing its future citizens, Gutmann seeks a way to take control – democratic control – of this process of education. Rather than leave this important process to chance, she would put it under democratic control, properly adjudicated by professionals, of course (Gutmann 1987, 71-94).

Although political educators do not agree on each point, merely engaging in the project means that all agree that some form of social reproduction is necessary because a liberal democratic state is not a spontaneous creation of nature. The strongest statement may come from Meira Levinson, who writes: "Rather, education lies at the heart of the liberal project; it is upon the realization of liberal educational goals that the success of liberalism itself depends" (Levinson 1999, 5; Callan 1997, 2). She is not referring to some Enlightenment ideal that education broadly understood will alleviate all social pathologies. Instead, she maintains that "we cannot trust that children will 'naturally' develop appropriate characters and commitments without being specifically educated in the liberal civic virtues" (Levinson 1999, 102). She, and contemporary political educators in general, are more concerned with a specifically *political* education that will promote, expand, and maintain liberalism (for Levinson) and liberal democracy more generally.[4] In the words of William Galston, "Its purpose is not the pursuit and

[4] I am not at the moment adhering to a strict separation between liberal and democrat, even though there are significant differences between the two. I feel it is unnecessary to maintain the distinction in this paper because the liberals under discussion are democrats and the democrats are liberals. However, Levinson

acquisition of truth but, rather, the formation of individuals who can effectively conduct their lives within, and support, their political community" (Galston 1991, 242-43; see also Esquith 1992; van Gunsteren 1996). Social reproduction is not an option, nor is it something to be left to chance.

A distinctively *conscious* form of social reproduction, an open system of socialization, is generally taken to be a requirement of any liberal or democratic system of political education. Stephen Macedo provides a useful warning here about what he (and I suspect the others) consider the only possible alternative: "The vice of a too-heavy reliance on indirect modes of civic education is that we might be led to exploit false consciousness. If we were to opt for handling our most basic conflicts via the silent operation of institutional biases that are never explicated and defended, we would forego the project of public justification" (Macedo 2000, 279). What he identifies as the project of public justification, and what Levinson describes as the liberal legitimation project, is the emphasis that liberal democratic theory places on arguments that are accessible and debatable in a public square, those would be arguments based on commitments or information accessible from or debatable in that public square alone (Macedo 1990, 11; Levinson 1999, 9-14).[5] In other words, there must be no special knowledge and there must be no special holders of knowledge. Whether it is justification or legitimation, liberal democratic politics must be open to all and be a process in which people

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takes the distinction as the starting point for her book and her signal difference from Gutmann, Galston, and others (Levinson 1999, 8).

[5] Galston is critical of the project of public justification as outlined by most liberal theorists. See Galston (1991) Chapter 5.

participate on the basis of a shared reason. Traditional modes of socialization are, therefore, highly problematic.[6]

Despite the widespread agreement on the need for social reproduction, only one of the political educators in question seems to recognize the irony involved: what is reproduced is not-yet-realized social order of an elite few, not that lived by the vast majority who may be very much opposed to what is being planned in Boston, Princeton, and Stanford. Eamonn Callan reveals a remarkable awareness when he makes a comment that could be applied to the work of his colleagues: "Yet even if I am right about all this, the likely cultural consequences of Rawlsian civic education will still seem like a catastrophe to many people. The education they want for their children is one that perpetuates a way of life in the particular form they cherish" (Callan 1997, 39). Indeed, in what sense is political education social "reproduction" when it explicitly seeks to produce something different, albeit better, than what we currently have? Galston is uncharacteristically insensitive to this problem, most likely because he thinks he can accommodate his liberal purposes to parental demands and religious traditions without jeopardizing either (Galston 1991, 251-255). Callan's point remains, however, and can be sharpened: until the goals of political educators are achieved, the most recalcitrant opponents to their programs will be the parents of their prospective students (see Burtt

[6] Religion is the most contested of traditional modes of socialization, although parental control of education and the parental role in socialization are also at issue as we shall see in the discussion of autonomy. But religion comes to the fore in the arguments of contemporary political educators because the most significant court cases regarding parental control of education were inspired not by parents' rights advocates, but by religious communities or religious sectarians. The cases are *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972) and *Mozert v. Hawkins County Board of Education* (1987). They arise in almost each argument on political education. For discussions by the authors in question see Callan (1997) 53-4, 146-47, 157-61; Galston (1995); Gutmann (1999) 29, 294-99, (1995) 565-77, (1989) 81-84; Macedo (2000) 153-210, (1995), (1990) 268-69; Levinson (1999) 53-4, 162-63.

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1994; Ruderman and Godwin 2000). This must raise concerns about the democracy, and indeed the *consciousness*, of the purported social reproduction.

THE GOALS OF POLITICAL EDUCATION

Contemporary political educators seek both of the following two goals: to promote the autonomy of the individual and to produce democratic affect, that is, society in which the citizens have a commitment to or an active concern for the autonomy of their fellows despite, or at best because of, their own autonomy. Political educators are put in an awkward position by the very nature of their enterprise. They seek to promote some version of autonomy and yet in doing so they must avoid the Scylla and Charybdis of indoctrination and indifference. The first problem is that they cannot achieve their goal of autonomy through indoctrination or intimidation or, to use Rousseau's phrase, force citizens to be free. Even under the genius of Rousseau this *dirigiste* approach opens too much of a paradox to provide the policy solutions they seek. At the same time, however, the fact that they engage the issue means they do not believe it is wise to take a laissez-faire approach to the problem of political education. They fear the mutual indifference on the part of citizens to each other's democratic rights that seems to be the tragic reality of a politically under-educated liberal democracy.

INDIVIDUAL AUTONOMY

The project to promote the autonomy of the individual among contemporary political theorists of the liberal tradition is too well-known to be worth documenting in this instance. Needless to say, even its critics seek less to roll-back autonomy than they

do to add elements they think are lacking in this project (Avineri and Shalit 1992; Barber 1974; Bellah et al. 1985; Benhabib 1992; Glendon 1991; MacIntyre 1981; Myers 2000; Sandel 1982; and Taylor 1991). I shall concentrate, therefore, on the process of developing autonomy as presented by political educators rather than explanations why or how they justify it as a goal. To this end, we should begin with Amy Gutmann, whose *Democratic Education* (1987) revived a formal interest in political education among political theorists. She is also responsible for setting the terms of the current debate and, for this reason, should be considered first.

Amy Gutmann is concerned to produce autonomy more in succeeding generations than in the present generation. Implicit in this goal is a fear that the current generation suffers from a lack of or an inhibited ability to achieve autonomy. In a sense, the present generation is already lost, almost as much as are past generations. So, unlike those who perceive the political crisis as particularly new, she is very much not interested in returning to a past time when things were better. She identifies three previous, and to some extent ongoing, theories of political education that have characterized or sought to influence the past. The first she calls Plato's "family state." This is a state in which all the members are considered part of one family and the state takes a parental, or more accurately, paternalistic attitude towards the subjects (Gutmann 1987, 22-28). The family state may produce its desired effect, and thus be a successful system of political education, but it is not acceptable to Gutmann because it assumes for the state a monolithic and absolute knowledge of the good for each individual. The family state brooks no opposition because it allows for neither difference nor disagreement (Gutmann 1987, 28). The second is Locke's "state of families," in which the state is a mere alliance

among different families with the parents having final control over the education of their children (Gutmann 1987, 28-33). The fundamental problem with this system is not so much that it is morally repugnant when successful, as that it is morally dubious simply because there is no mechanism for producing success of any kind. As she reminds us, there is no reason to assume that parents will do the right thing (Gutmann 1987, 29). The last theory is one she identifies with John Stuart Mill and calls the "state of individuals." This is characterized by an attempt to produce autonomous individuals and little else (Gutmann 1987, 33-41). Her objection is that, while it may serve the goal of autonomy or the individual's freedom of choice, it does not facilitate a collective freedom of choice, that is, it is not sufficiently democratic. Of the three versions of political education that Gutmann identifies, really only the last two are active in America and advanced democracies more generally and present a practical problem for her system of political education to overcome. These last two are also the products, in Gutmann's analysis, of two of liberalism's most important philosophers, Locke and Mill. Her critique of their policies of political education, therefore, is also a critique of their implementation of the liberal project.

In place of the state of families and the state of individuals Gutmann offers what she calls the "democratic state of education" (Gutmann 1987, 41-47). Primarily this is developed to correct the defects of the state of families and the state of individuals. At its core it values democracy and is justified by its commitments to the democratic state. But in response to the two competing states of education, the democratic state uses professional educators to protect against the prejudices of the family and parochial groups (Gutmann 1987, 44), and limits the possible ways of life acceptable to the democracy.

The reason for the first is readily understood, the second requires explanation. According to Gutmann, the democratic state must limit the ways of life it both promotes and permits for two reasons: (1) to develop moral freedom (autonomy), and (2) to develop identification with the democratic populous in a way that will facilitate participation in the democracy (affect) (Gutmann 1987, 43). Ways of life that are excessively self-limiting do not sufficiently allow for, let alone promote, autonomy. Other ways of life that are exclusionary or sectarian, she argues, inhibit democratic participation for all and threaten the attachments democratic citizens should properly have for one another.

The other main contemporary political educators agree with Gutmann on the issue of promoting autonomy, among whom Eamonn Callan and Meira Levinson are the two most in favor of promoting individual autonomy. They both establish their proposals for educational reform on the requirements for developing autonomy in children through the schools. The specifics of the recommendations may differ, but their goals are the same and are justified in the same ways: They seek to develop liberal citizens largely upon the Rawlsian model. According to Callan, "The Core of my argument is the thesis that the development of the virtue of justice under pluralism implies the growth of autonomy to a notably sophisticated level" (Callan, 1997, 68; 1988; see also Levinson 1999, 58). But one can find a number of others who also seek to promote autonomy through political education (Aspin and Chapman 2000; McCabe 1995; Puolimatka 1997).

Stephen Macedo, on the other hand, is more reticent about baldly setting autonomy as a goal of political education. In his earlier work, *Liberal Virtues* (1990), Macedo was more openly committed to autonomy of the individual. In *Diversity and Distrust* (2000) he has followed Rawls, however, in turning to a political liberalism and a

position that sets commitment to autonomy as merely one sectarian view among others. Yet as firmly as he may wish to maintain the ambivalent position of political liberalism towards any particular good, his commitment to autonomy is never far beneath the surface. It is revealed even when he claims to eschew the goal: "The point is not to promote a comprehensive philosophical doctrine of autonomy or individuality, but to make sure that no authority imposes an intellectual tyranny on children, which would thwart their right to freedom" (Macedo 2000, 238). Perhaps some versions of comprehensive liberalism seek to promote philosophical *doctrines* of autonomy rather than autonomy itself, but the practical effect of comprehensive liberalism, or the weakly perfectionist liberalism that Levinson advocates (Levinson 1999, 131), would be an autonomy not far different from the freedom Macedo seeks to protect. In effect, therefore, his protection against intellectual tyranny is merely a (somewhat) different justification for promoting autonomy, with the added complexity that even comprehensive doctrines can, themselves, be tyrannical.

William Galston is the least committed proponent of education for autonomy, although I shall argue that he is far more committed than some of his critics believe him to be (Levinson 1999, 92; Macedo 2000, 208; Callan 1997, 135). The passage that best reveals his ambivalence toward autonomy and the one used by his critics to charge him with this crime he calls a basic fact of liberal sociology: "The greatest threat to children in modern liberal societies is not that they will believe in something too deeply, but that they will believe in nothing very deeply at all" (Galston 1989, 101; 1991, 255). This statement comes at the end of an argument on behalf of parental influence over children's education and against Gutmann's claims of the state's right to intrude on the family for

the sake of promoting autonomy. In the paragraph before the passage I have just quoted, Galston offers two arguments against the charge that his defense of the family leaves children open to brainwashing by their parents. First, families cannot sustain their efforts at brainwashing even if they wished to do so – and he implies that this wish would be rare anyway – because children are aware that no family has absolute and sole authority in all matters. Second, children cannot be so isolated from the rest of the world that they would never be tempted by the different ways of life available in a liberal society.[7] Yet these are not arguments against setting autonomy as a goal, of course, but arguments against specific policies for achieving that end.

Galston is a proponent of autonomy. The very passage that has raised suspicion against his commitment is, in fact, the passage most telling of his commitment to this very goal. For the danger he identifies in believing in nothing very deeply is that it can prevent, and maybe even render impossible, the critical self-reflection that is the prize of autonomy. An easy-going skeptic, he warns, is far less likely to engage in a serious deliberation between ways of life than one who is at first committed, then challenged, and possibly forced to abandon a great source of meaning through a difficult experience of autonomous introspection. Galston's goal, then, is still autonomy. The dispute over how to produce a more profound level of autonomy and the experience of it we may characterize as a quibble.

Whether seeking to produce a greater sense of autonomy or provide it with a greater significance when it is eventually exercised, on the one hand, or producing it as

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[7] One could imagine or dig out of the newspaper horrific tales of isolation and child abuse that would render both of these arguments weak or null. These cases, however, are rare and, more importantly, would not be solved by a more intrusive educational system. The kind of isolation and restriction required to

early as possible, on the other, contemporary political educators do seek to produce autonomy in students. Schools provide an excellent location for the development of autonomy because their main function is the production of certain modes of thinking and practices of reason. And autonomy, accordingly, is considered above all an exercise in the use of reason or critical judgement (Callan 1988, 29-31; Gutmann 1987, 30; Levinson 1999, 36-41; Macedo 1990, 265-277; and more generally Dworkin 1988; Meyers 1989; Raz 1999). The schools, therefore, are the logical place to seek to develop the rational capacity for freeing oneself from uncritical and unwanted commitments, that is, for developing autonomy.

DEMOCRATIC AFFECT

The ability to engage in rational discourse and to use critical self-reflection when making political and moral judgements is consistently proclaimed as a goal of education by theorists, but it is not the only goal. More interesting at the moment is the list of non-rational lessons they wish to teach students. According to Levinson, most of the work of political education goes to producing "the virtues characteristic of liberal democracies..." [to] develop[ing] the skills and habits of character... to respect[ing] and value the democratic process... (Levinson 1999, 102). Likewise, Stephen Macedo explains that the "liberal ideal of character is one with 'horizons' broad enough to sympathize with a variety of different ways of life" (Macedo 1990, 267). Political education is meant to produce a certain type of character, to produce specific "dispositions" (Macedo 2000, 9, 12). Amy Gutmann, for her part, adopts the language of faith to make a similar point:

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undercut the force of Galston's arguments would need to be so severe that the state would intrude, and has, even without arguments based on the goal of autonomy.

"Public schools can avoid even indirect repression and still foster what one might call a democratic civil religion: a set of beliefs, habits, and ways of thinking that support democratic deliberation and are compatible with a wide variety of religious commitments" (Gutmann 1987, 104). These theorists are squarely facing the problem that a commitment to critical self-reflection or the development of reason is not sufficient to produce good and virtuous citizens, the kind of citizens political education is supposed to prepare.

Contemporary political educators are not primarily interested in the formal curriculum of schools, even thought they believe that schools are the main vehicle for political education, because the lessons of political education are not exclusively intellectual resources. In other words, they focus their attention on the "hidden curriculum" (to which I shall return below) because political education is not primarily about knowledge; rather, they argue, it is about affinity. According to William Galston, the state must establish a vigorous system of civic education and establish educational guidelines because it has a compelling interest in doing so. The state interest, however, regards "ensuring that the convictions, competencies, and virtues required for liberal citizenship are widely shared" (Galston 1995, 529). Convictions, competencies, and virtues are not pieces of information that can be shared between teacher and student; they cannot be taught through a particular lesson plan; they cannot be evaluated through standardized or other testing methods. More to the point, Galston explains elsewhere that his understanding of civic education is decidedly not philosophic education, that it is not the acquisition of knowledge. "If children are to be brought to accept these commitments as valid and binding, the method must be a pedagogy that is far more rhetorical than

rational… It is unrealistic to believe that more than a few adult citizens of liberal societies will ever move beyond the kind of civic commitment engendered by such a pedagogy" (Galston 1991, 243-44). While Galston may be far more bold – or honest – than other political educators in detailing what such an education might entail, he is not alone in seeking primarily democratic affect from political education.

Eamonn Callan develops a courageous response to the problem of developing the affect needed in a liberal democracy by appealing to a certain type of liberal patriotism. I call this courageous because, as Callan well knows, patriotism has not always been accepted by liberals as a worthy source of motivation. He has already received some criticism for this (Schrag 1999). But even as he admits that patriotism has, by jingo, much to account for, he also suggests that a commitment to American democracy has played an important role in some of the best in American history (Callan 1999, 220). As he describes it: " A liberal ideal of patriotism is a way of shoring up the motivational strength of those demands against the pressures of pluralism. The patriotism that matters is no dilution of justice" (Callan 1997, 175). Indeed, he insists that patriotism of the right sort is exactly what liberal democracies need if they are to achieve and to maintain justice even as they resist the many forces that a liberal polity raises against itself (Callan 1997, 223). Callan's defense of liberal patriotism can also be understood as a response to the critique that liberalism lives off of the social capital of pre-liberal societies as the rise of the individual threatens the community (Habermas 1975; Hayek 1976; Kristol 1976; MacIntyre 1981).[8]

[8] These four are cited by Macedo as he concludes his own attempt to refute this very charge (Macedo 1990, 285).

The struggle between autonomy and affect is receiving increased attention as many liberal theorists – and not just political educators – have discovered that the independence they have sought threatens the social cohesion upon which it depends. Callan's liberal patriotism is the kind of response to the problem that Patchen Markell has called "the strategy of redirection" (Markell 2000). Instead of directing the affect of citizens to the state, the *volk*, the Party or some other specter of recent history, many theorists have suggested that we redirect these commitments towards constitutional principles or theories of justice (Barber 1996; Brubaker 1992; Greenfeld 1992; Ignatieff 1993; Ingram 1996; Kristeva 1993; Singer 1996; Spencer and Wollman 1998; Tamir 1993; Viroli 1996). Even Jurgen Habermas has explored this idea, although his final conclusions do not yet seem set (Habermas, 1974, 1989, 1994, 1998a, 1998b). Eamonn Callan's attempted transformation of patriotism may provide us with an ideal type for this strategy, but we can find the same redirection in the work of most contemporary political educators. The point at issue is not how common is the attempt, however, but how successful it may be. Can we promote autonomy at the same time that we develop unchosen commitments in children? Before attempting an answer to this hoary problem of liberal theory, it would be best to address the delivery system of contemporary political education, namely the school.

THE SCHOOL

All contemporary political educators agree that the mechanism for political education and its appropriate location is the school. Amy Gutmann provides a straightforward explanation early in *Democratic Education* that belies the complexity of

her decision: "I concentrate on the role of schools rather than parents in educating citizens not because the parental role is less significant but because the role of schools is subject to more direct political control" (Gutmann 1987, 52). But her decision to concentrate on schools is based on more than expediency. According to her, schools are the primary institutions for teaching a civic culture. The reason is that "even if schools avoid all courses that deal explicitly with morality or civic education, they still engage in moral education by virtue of their 'hidden curriculum', noncurricular practices that serve to develop moral attitudes and character in children" (Gutmann 1987, 53).[9] One might feel misled by political theorists if one were to seek advice from them on the development of curricula or guidelines for textbooks to be used in classes on political education. They offer almost nothing in this regard, the most notable exceptions being Galston's recommendation for a moralized, perhaps even bowdlerized history of the nation (Galston 1991, 243-44), and Callan's response to Galston in which he offers a not dissimilar education through what he considers challenging literature (Callan 1997, 122-23).

Apart from these two suggestions contemporary theorists of political education direct their attention, instead, at what Amy Gutmann has called the hidden curriculum but we might also call the structure of the school. Levinson provides the most extensive explanation of the intended structure. She writes: "This means that children are most likely to develop the capacity for autonomy in a community whose normative structure is itself autonomy-driven – i.e. in an environment that is explicitly committed to and structured by the norms of critical inquiry and reflection, evidential justification, and

[9] On the subject of the hidden curriculum, Gutmann cites Jackson (1968) as well as Purpel and Ryan (1976). But also see Bowles and Gintis (1976), Corony and Levin (1985), and Spring (1971).

mutual respect and toleration" (Levinson 1999, 61). Whether it be Macedo's claim that "common schools embody the fundamental liberal civic commitment to mutual understanding," Callan's claim that "the roles and ideals that the institution offers to children" should be designed to foster the virtue of the citizen, or Gutmann's attempt to find the right balance of "internal democracy… necessary to cultivate participatory virtues among students," Levinson's sentiments are echoed throughout the literature (Callan 1997, 176; Gutmann 1987, 92; Macedo 2000, 232; and more generally Dahl 1996; Flathman 1996; Meyer 1996; Paris 1991; Puolimatka 1997; Steutel and Spieker 2000; White 1999).

The significance of concentrating on the hidden curriculum over the formal curriculum cannot be overstated. Not only does it reflect an interest in affective development over cognitive development, it also reveals the very *type* of education or rather the *method*. The structure of the school provides the hidden curriculum so that lessons are not the method of instruction, the daily interactions among the students and between the students, the teachers, and the administrators are the means of political education. Instead of a formal or explicit curriculum that seeks to produce specific results in a way that keeps everyone aware of what is going on (biology classes are obviously biology classes as civics are civics), the hidden curriculum would rather insinuate its lessons through the easy tutorial of habit. There is nothing disqualifying about habit itself as an educational tool, as both Aristotle and Aquinas would attest, but it must be seen for what it is. Whereas autonomy might be developed by the use of reasoning skills that make possible a personal challenge to an established position, habit as developed through the hidden curriculum seeks the opposite. It seeks to establish

comfortable positions that will be adhered-to in adversity. In fact, the unwavering adherence to these habits does much of the work of achieving the larger goals of the political educators.

Here is where we find contemporary political educators returning to John Dewey's hope that "we may produce in schools a projection in type of the society we should like to realize" (Dewey 1997, 317). In all of the passages that I have just quoted from contemporary theorists we can find this same intention to produce in the schools a better society but, more to the point, a better society that can then be carried over outside of the school into the larger society. The hope is not merely that students will adopt certain affects compatible with or necessary for a liberal democracy and maintain those affects throughout their lives, but that they will seek to reproduce the conditions of the school – the diversity, tolerance, critical inquiry, evidentiary justification, mutual respect, broad horizons, etc. – outside of the school. But this raises two questions: (1) to what extent will they consciously seek to reproduce those conditions, and (2) to what extent is this a viable method for changing society? These questions return us to the issue of social reproduction, the very issue that has launched much of the current interest in political education.

Gutmann's hopes for a conscious social reproduction are thrown in doubt by the fact that the affects developed in schools through the hidden curriculum, should they succeed in being reproduced in society, are motivated not by a conscious commitment to them but by habituation. This is not to say that high-school graduates as adult citizens would seek to reproduce the conditions of school out of some sort of nostalgia, much like a political version of *Happy Days*. Basing reform of society on a desire for people to

relive and perpetuate the conditions of high-school betrays either a very different (and fortunate) personal history or a tin ear. Yet Gutmann's system does rely on habituation nonetheless, on developing patterns of behavior in the school that will be perpetuated outside the school. This is not a new ambition in education, of course, but a reliance on habit does seem to be at odds with her ambitions for social reproduction that is *conscious*. Beyond Gutmann's arguments, however, the whole project of political education through the hidden curriculum is endangered by reliance upon habit.

Assuming that political educators intend to produce a commitment to reform that is not merely based on habit, it would have to be a commitment that is somehow conscious and could not, therefore, be the result of the hidden curriculum *qua* hidden curriculum. A commitment might be implanted by the hidden curriculum, but to go beyond habit the reasons for the commitment would have to be made explicit by, for example, reflection upon the experiences of school as contained in the hidden curriculum. According to Aquinas, habit can be understood in two ways, properly as that by which we act and relatedly as that which is held by habit. The natural law can be considered a habit in the second sense, he argues, but not the first (Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* I-II, Q. 94, a. 1). Similarly, the democratic affects can be held habitually but not be, themselves, habits. So what are they? They are uncritical propositions acquired through acculturation in the schools (Paris 1991, 887). So long as they are only this, political education would seem to achieve far less autonomy and far more redirection. Clearly the goal of autonomy suffers for the goal of democratic affect.

While such a system may be an adequate means of acquiring these dispositions, contemporary political educators with their commitments to autonomy cannot rest

satisfied with such habitual affects. Firstly, they seem unreliable (a problem to which I shall return). Secondly, if they are only the starting-points for a critical reflection that will begin at a later date, as some might suggest (consider again Galston's defense of inculcating beliefs in the young), why postpone the inevitable? That is to say, if we must rely upon critical reflection to do the work of political education (assuming for the moment that the reflection is, indeed, critical and not merely credulous) the whole project of using the hidden curriculum and school as a model is rendered pointless. The hidden curriculum was offered as a means of developing democratic affects because autonomy as critical self-reflection does not produce them with certainty: one's own autonomy need not produce a commitment to the autonomy of others. This is the underlying problem at the heart of the liberal project and the reason why political education is necessary. Yet producing democratic affects that could be critically assessed in the act of autonomy would not solve this problem. The only solution would seem to be the development of democratic affects that *cannot* be criticized by the autonomous individual, criticized, that is, by an individual who is truly critical and not merely credulous. Here the tension between autonomy and affect reaches its limit, and goes beyond. Galston's (provisional) commitment to the values of one's parents would not solve this problem either. If the autonomous rejection that a deep commitment makes more meaningful eventually takes place, there is no guarantee that anything more democratic or more liberal will replace it. Indeed, his fears about youth without beliefs can be true of adults: at any age autonomy can be merely a fence around an empty lot.

The need to make the hidden curriculum explicit raises a problem with the use of the hidden curriculum, but it also points to a larger problem involved in using the school

as a model. It is assumed that going to school in an environment that models the type of society we should like to realize will develop in children a preference for that type of society, a preference which will remain with the graduates when they become adult citizens. What is not sufficiently considered is the reaction produced by the cold fact that the political societies graduates enter when becoming citizens do not resemble the schools they have just recently left behind. Will the dissonance that ensues lead to active engagement in the political system in an effort to recreate the conditions of the schools, or will it lead to a passive cynicism that isolates would-be-citizens from political activity? Only if the model produces the former citizen is it a success, but there is as much to suggest that it will just as likely, if not more likely, produce the latter. Aristotle, as an advocate of moral education through habit, feared that any deviation from the practices that established the habit would undermine it (*Ethics* II. i). More recent studies suggest that students soon abandon the political attitudes they acquired in school if and when they enter a different environment (Jennings and Niemi 1975). In fact, by concentrating their attentions on the schools and not the political world beyond graduation, contemporary political educators do not avail themselves of a growing and impressive body of work that demonstrates the importance of a political education in adulthood (Finkel 1985, Parry, Moyser, and Day 1992; Putnam 1993, 2000; Verba et al. 1993). These studies suggest that it is the ongoing activity in a range of associations (and here the studies do not agree among themselves as to what types of associations qualify) that provides the most significant political education.

Finally, a brief survey of the most successful programs for encouraging active participation among students points to the construction not of a model of the type of

society we should like to realize, but of the type of society we actually have. Several of the most impressive programs for developing political knowledge and political activity among students have been studied and reveal a consistent pattern. Those programs involving students in political activities that most closely resemble the political activities available to them as adults, such as voting, show the best results (Hahn 1999; Harris 1997; Purta et al. 2001; Rappaport and Kletzien 1997; Roker, Player, and Coleman 1999; Verba et al. 1995; Youniss, McLellan, and Yates 1997). One program in particular, Kids Voting USA, in which students cast mock ballots in the precincts alongside their parents, even had the effect of increasing political turnout among adults (Hall and Jones 1998; McDevitt and Chaffee 1998). By contrast, programs that bear little or no relation to the clearly political activities of an adult citizen, among these service learning projects are the most common, have almost no holdover effect (Ewens 1987; Mercer 1973; Center for Human Resources 1999). The lesson to take from these studies of various programs is that changing society by modeling a future society in the schools has little hope of success. Instead, it is the adult world that seems to have a greater influence upon political behavior than our experience as schoolchildren.

Democratic Miseducation

Some of the political educators we have considered express worries about the effects of capitalism on their programs for political education. Eamonn Callan warns us that the distance between capitalism and democracy "should make us worry that a real democratic education might do no more than prepare children for a citizenship that will not be theirs to practice when they become adults" (Callan 1997, 222; see also Levinson

1999, 86). I suggest that the disparity between the experience in the schools that political educators are so keen on controlling and the experience of politics that adult citizens have is at least as alienating as that between capitalism and democracy. In fact, we should question the whole project of locating political education in the schools when the intention is less to prepare students for the political activities they really will encounter than it is to prepare them to create a political world we, and they, have never seen.

The aims of political education are worthwhile and the premise of political education – that it is a constant, not an episodic need – are sound. Beyond the persistent tension in liberal theory between individual autonomy and democratic affect, the means used by contemporary political educators to achieve these often contradictory goals are more problematic. First of all, the schools are in many ways the least appropriate location for playing the tension between autonomy and affect. The problem here is that just as young people are developing the skills that are required by autonomous individuals, we would have them use their new skills to abandon previously held commitments while the hidden curriculum of the school develops new and different ones. And so the strategy of redirection takes place under the cover of the first feelings of autonomy. Galston may, indeed, be right to say that not believing in anything very strongly at all is the modern or post-modern predicament. But what political educators intend for the schools is not so much playing the tension between autonomy and affect as it is hiding the result. I am not suggesting a radical policy of "deschooling", to use Ivan Illich's term (Illich 1971; see also Hern 1996; Lister 1974; Reimer 1972). Instead, I offer that the tension between autonomy and affect that plays itself out in the schools is especially problematic and possibly unhelpful.

Secondly, and much more practically, the contemporary means of political education that seeks to use the schools has a long way to go to demonstrate that it could ever be effective. Students do respond to the structure of the school and its hidden curriculum. But adults also respond to their own lives, especially to their political and associational experiences. So while concentrating political education on students through the schools may seem like the most practical way to educate the next generation of citizens, the results will be limited as the longest and most important period for political education – adulthood – is ignored.

Turning political education towards adults will be no easy task. We do not have the institutional structure of the school with its mandatory attendance where we can command large numbers of people and regularize their experiences. And good for us! The idea offends not just the modern sensibility. But the reason for the offense raises the real issue at stake in the political education of adults, one that is largely masked by the age and developmental immaturity of students. This issue is one of control. According to Hannah Arendt, "Whoever wants to educate adults really wants to act as their guardian and prevent them from political activity" (Arendt 1968, 177). This is a reasonable suspicion, but is it necessarily the case? Could we not have a political education of adults that seeks not to guard them but to release them from guardianship; not to prevent political activity, but to make it possible? This is a tall order and one I cannot fill here. If we could develop such a system of political education for adults, however, it would avoid many of the theoretical and practical problems identified with the political education of children, and it would educate adults not for a future democracy that does not yet exist, but through and for the democracy that does exist.

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